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PAUL FREEMAN
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June 29, 1954

Admiral A. H. McCullom
Care of "The Saturday Review"
25 West 45th Street
New York 36, New York

Dear Admiral McCullom:

I read your review of Admiral Theobald's Book with no little satisfaction, for it is a frightful thought that some 3,000 of our men were needlessly killed and our Pacific Fleet almost wholly destroyed to bring to fruition President Roosevelt's determination to take part in the Second War. However, that is Admiral Theobald's own deduction, and doubtless is quite wrong. But there is a preliminary matter which is even more important and which is:- Has Admiral Theobald misstated any fact--whether accidentally or purposefully? Certainly you yourself were in a position at that very time to know more than he of the true facts and of all the facts.

And for that reason I venture to ask you certain questions in the hope that you will be so generous as to answer them, and excuse my trespass on your kindness.

1. From your knowledge of matters, did you detect any misstatement of fact in Admiral Theobald's Book?

2. In your review, you speak of his assembling "partial" facts and innuendo. By the word "partial" do you mean that only some of the facts were given and others equally important purposely omitted, or do you mean that he relied on facts--though they supported his "partial" (and not impartial) deductions? For a fact, if it be a fact, is not "partial." It may be amplified or explained by other facts, but in, of and by itself it can be neither "partial" nor impartial.

3. The Admiral states that for some years prior to 1940 our Navy had concluded (a) that the Philippines could not be defended successfully against an attack by Japan, and (b) that in the event of a War, Japan would certainly strike at Pearl Harbor (or at the Canal). Is this statement accurate?

4. If the previous statement be correct, then why was a Magic machine sent to the Philippines and not to Pearl Harbor--if only one could be spared, and who was responsible

for that decision? Furthermore, since one can conclude that our forces in the Philippines had a Magic machine one wonders why the information obtained there was not communicated to Pearl Harbor. Do you know anything on this point?

5. I have read the Report of the Navy Commission on Pearl Harbor which concludes with the terrible stricture on Admiral Stark--that never again should he be entrusted with a position requiring the exercise of superior judgment. Do you know whether at that hearing these Magic telegrams were in evidence? From a reading of their Report I gather not, but I should like to know. This seems to me most important.

6. Certainly the President was advised promptly of the information contained in the Japanese telegrams. Did either the Secretary of War or the Secretary of the Navy know of their contents each day as they were decoded, and if not, do you know when they first learned of them? Besides the President, Admiral Stark, General Marshall and you yourself, do you know who else each day and day by day knew their contents?

7. Your answer to Mr. Robert H. Montgomery does not deny that you urged that Admiral Kimmel be given full information. If you did so--and I am certain from your own letter that you did--were you given any reason or any excuse for the failure to follow your very sane suggestion, and if you were, what was it?

8. My information is that Admiral Kimmel has never been granted what he has so frequently demanded, i.e. that he be court-martialed. Can there be any reasonable doubt in your mind that such a court would have found him guilty of the grossest neglect and given him a dishonorable discharge, had he been sent the data you yourself prepared (and urged that it be sent on to him) and thereafter followed the course he did in fact follow?

To me the basic question is not what conclusion Admiral Theobald comes to, for (given the <u>facts</u>, and all the facts) each intelligent person must draw his own conclusion.

As I said at the beginning, it is not a pleasing thought that the President (in effect) purposely arranged matters so that the two local Commanders were deprived of information which they should have had, but that is a deduction and the more important thing is to know whether what Admiral Theobald's book states as facts <u>are</u> facts, and what if any vital fact he has failed to state. That is my purpose in asking you to be so kind if you will as to let me have the answers to my questions, for if his "facts" are wrong his deduction is worthless.

Very respectfully yours,

Paul Freeman

PF:C

3522 3rd., Street North
Arlington 1, Virginia
13 July 1954

Mr. Paul Freeman
12 South 12th Street
Philadelphia 7, Pennsylvania

My dear Mr. Freeman:

I have delayed somewhat in replying to your very thoughtful letter of June 29th referring to my review of Admiral Theobald's book. May I say at the outset that your questions and remarks are very much to the point and are most moving. Before essaying a discussion therefore, I thought it but due you that I refresh my mind from the official record.

I do not know that I can answer your queries in the one, two, three order in which you have posed them. I shall however, try to discuss each of the points you have raised in the hope of clarifying what has, in many respects, become a most confusing matter.

I am grateful for your scholarly dissertation on what constitutes a fact. I thoroughly agree with you that a single fact cannot be partial or impartial. It is an entity and stands solely on its own merit. In my use of the adjective "partial" to qualify the plural noun "facts", I thought I was following the definition of "partial" set forth in Webster's New Unabridged Dictionary which defines the adjective "partial" as:- of, pertaining to, or affecting a part only; not total or entire.--- Very likely a more precise term for me to have used would have been "a part of the facts".

I have not made a point by point check of the facts that Admiral Theobald presents in his book. I feel sure however, that the Admiral would not present anything as a fact that he did not believe to be one. I suggest that what we are concerned with here, is not an assemblage of isolated facts but rather a series of episodes that are difficult of appraisal unless all of the then known facts as well as the temper of the times is taken into consideration.

Admiral Theobald's statement cited by you, to the effect that the Philippines could not be held is, I think, a fair appraisal of Naval opinion, shared generally by most thinking Naval Officers (and there were some who did think), prior to about 1938 or 1939; and by many even after those dates. It might be well to recall that in 1922, the United States entered into a treaty for the limitation of armaments with a number of nations including Japan. This treaty limited the number and size of certain important categories of naval vessels that could be possessed by each of the signatory powers. Another, and most important item so far as the United States was concerned, provision was the stipulation that prohibited the United States from improving, modernizing or increasing the garrisons of Naval or army bases in United States possessions west of the 180th meridian. By this means United States interests and possessions in the Far East were put in pawn to the Japanese and the United States Navy was rendered incapable of early offensive action in the Orient.

This treaty was hailed in this country as a great accomplishment for peace; and the then Administration and the then Secretary of State received much popular acclaim for the negotiation of this masterful implement of peace. Many senior naval officers of the time were rather outspoken in their criticism of this treaty but were effectively silenced by the

Administration then in power and by popular clamor. I think that from 1922 onward for some years, it was generally conceded in Naval circles that we could not hold the Philippines nor quickly regain them in case of Japanese attack. The Japanese abrogated this treaty in late 1934 and the abrogation became effective two years later in 1936. The U.S. Congress however, repeatedly refused to appropriate any considerable amount of money for building up defenses or Naval establishments in Guam or the Philippines.

On the other hand, General MacArthur, having at first as one of his principal aides our present President, General Eisenhower, went to the Philippines in 1934 or 1935 for the avowed purpose of building a Philippine Army as a bulwark for the defense of the independence of those islands then scheduled for 1946. By 1938, and certainly by late 1939, when I assumed the duty of Chief of the Far East Section of O.N.I., reports from General MacArthur justified the belief that, even if the whole of the Philippines could not be held, at all events, an important enclave centering around Corregidor could be held for several years; if not indefinitely. Many individual officers of the War and Navy Departments were dubious of these claims. Nevertheless, the Navy Department, accepting the War Department's appraisal resulting from General MacArthur's reports, went ahead to acquire underground space in Corregidor and to place in operation therein an Intelligence facility. An important element of this Intelligence facility was a Communication Intelligence set-up and the effort right up to 1941 was to build up this organization at the expense, if necessary, of other Communication Intelligence groups. Assuming that the base could be held, as was consistently reported right up to the evacuation of Manila on 2 January 1942, the advantage of a functioning Communication Intelligence organization in the Philippines is obvious.

Regarding Admiral Theobald's statement that in case of war it was generally believed that the Japanese would strike at Pearl Harbor or the Panama Canal; this is again, I believe, a fair appraisal of Naval opinion. So far as I know this opinion was not based on any specific information but derived as a result of consideration of the strategic geography of the United States. I am sure that such a possibility was constantly in the minds of the Commanders in Chief of our Fleet from 1935 to 1938.---I knew the views of Admiral Reeves Commander in Chief in 1935 rather well; and served on the Staff of his successor Admiral Hepburn from 1936 to 1938. What could be more obvious than that in the event of war, the Japs would promptly attack our most important base in the Pacific within reach, Pearl Harbor; or would try to destroy the Panama Canal in order to impede the movement of our naval forces and sea-borne logistic elements from the Atlantic to the Pacific?

I think that in the foregoing discussion I may perhaps, have indicated why a "magic machine" was sent to the Philippines rather than to Pearl Harbor. The decision on this would have been taken in accordance with approved policy by the Director of Naval Communications, who had general cognizance over these matters.

Our forces in the Philippines and in the Far East in general, were instructed to send copies of their Intelligence reports to the Commander in Chief Pacific Fleet, which they did. To lend added emphasis to this point, some three weeks to a month before the attack on Pearl Harbor, Admiral Hart was specifically ordered to send reports and estimates of Japanese naval movements and intentions direct to Admiral Kimmel as well as to the Navy Department. This was done, at my insistence, on the basis that Hart was closest to happenings and was in the best position to evaluate quickly.

Referring to your item 5; I presume that you refer to the proceedings, findings and opinions of the Naval Court of Inquiry, convened sometime in 1944, on the Pearl Harbor affair. A Naval Court of Inquiry is, or was at that time before the so called uniform Military Code, a legal body of competent jurisdiction somewhat analogous to a Grand Jury in Civil legal procedure. The members of this Court were three three distinguished Admirals, retired shortly before the war viz:- Admiral Orin G. Murfin, Admiral Edward C Kalbfus and Vice Admiral Adolphus Andrews. This Court arrived at a long series of findings of fact and a somewhat less lengthy set of opinions. This Court found that there were no grounds for preferring charges for trial by General Court Martial of any officer concerned. In other words, and in civil parlance (forgive me if I err), there was no true bill. In the 2nd. endorsement on the record of this Court and dated 1 December 1944, the then Commander in Chief and Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral E. J. King, comments in paragraph 6 as follows:- "The derelictions on the part of Admiral Stark and Admiral Kimmel were faults of omission rather than faults of commission. In the case in question they indicate lack of the superior judgement necessary for exercising command commensurate with their rank and assigned duties rather than culpable inefficiency". In paragraph 7 he states:- "Since trial by General Court Martial is not warranted by the evidence adduced, appropriate administrative action would appear to be the relegation of both these officers to positions in which lack of superior judgement may not result in future errors".

The Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Forrestal, was not entirely satisfied with the findings and opinions of the Court of Inquiry and the recommendations thereon of the Commander in Chief and Chief of Naval Operations; mainly because neither Rear Admiral T. S. Wilkinson, Director of Naval Intelligence at the time of the Pearl Harbor attack, nor I had been able to testify before the Court. The two of us were separately engaged in important operations against the enemy and our immediate Commanders informed the Navy Department that we could not be spared at that time to go back to Pearl Harbor to testify before the Court. The two Commanders to whom I refer were Admiral Halsey, in the case of Wilkinson, and Admiral Kinkaid, in my own case. Neither of these two officers was in or around the Navy Department at the time of Pearl Harbor. Subsequently the Secretary of the Navy directed Admiral H. Kent Hewitt to investigate the Pearl Harbor matter primarily for the purpose of developing what Admiral Wilkinson and I had to say on the matter. Finally under date of 13 August 1945, Mr. Forrestal agreed with Admiral King's endorsement of 1944 and stated:- "Accordingly I direct (a) Rear Husband E. Kimmel USN (Ret.) shall not hold any position in the United States Navy which requires exercise of superior judgement. (b) Admiral Harold R. Stark USN (Ret.) shall not hold any position in the United States Navy which requires exercise of superior judgement."

As one reads Admiral King's endorsement in its entirety, there are discernable certain political over-tones of the times. The Secretary of the Navy, as was to be expected of a political appointee, was more circumspect. He waited about one year plus one investigation before committing himself. I understand that Admiral Stark has since received a retraction of their statements from Admiral King and the Secretary of the Navy.

I think that on the whole, certain other things should be understood.

Mr Knox, the Secretary of the Navy at the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor, was relatively new in the position. He was a prominent Republican politician, having been that party's nominee for the Vice Presidency in 1936. He was also one of Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders of 1898. All in all he was a grand man but hardly attuned to the subleties of Pacific basin politics and grand strategy. In December 1940 Admiral Richardson, the then Commander in Chief of the Fleet, had come to Washington for the avowed purpose of protesting to the President the fixation of his fleet at Pearl Harbor, and its depletion of reconnaissance elements such as destroyers and aircraft carriers for service in the Atlantic. Admiral King, then commanding in the Atlantic, had a constantly growing problem of more and more area to patrol and he quite properly insisted that his forces be augmented as his responsibilities were increased by government policy. The only way in which the ships and trained crews necessary for the Atlantic could be obtained, was by further withdrawals from the Pacific Fleet. The types of ships most needed for patrolling in the Atlantic were precisely those types essential to tactical reconnaissance around the core of a fleet at sea or around a fleet anchorage containing a fleet, viz:- aircraft carriers, cruisers and destroyers. Richardson's point was, that either the withdrawals from the Pacific Fleet must be stopped or the bulk of the Fleet should be withdrawn from its exposed position in the Hawaiian Islands. Admiral Kimmel, then commanding the Cruisers of the Fleet, concurred in this view. Mr. Knox, in his review of the situation, is said to have felt that Admiral Richardson did not have a sufficiently belligerent attitude. In any event Richardson was relieved of his command rather abruptly and Kimmel substituted in late January or early February of 1941. Therefore, when Kimmel accepted the job of Commander in Chief he must have realized that his strategic base was fixed at Pearl Harbor by politics and that he could expect further depletion of his aircraft carrier and destroyer strength for service in the Atlantic under Admiral King.

With all this in view and the further consideration that there was a very considerable mass of information, independant of "magic" sources, available to Admiral Kimmel all pointing to the increasing imminence of hostilities; and that he had been specifically given a "war warning", he still did not assume an adequate tactical posture for the security of his force. In the final analysis a commander, faced with the possibility of an attack on his forces, must depend for ultimate security upon a system of physical reconnaissance and local counter attack. From a technical point of view I do not think there can be serious cavil with Kimmel's decision to bring his fleet under the defenses of Pearl Harbor. It would seem however, that before entrusting the safety of his entire fleet to those defenses it would have been entirely proper for him to have determined for himself the state of efficiency and alertness of those defenses. The recorded testimony indicates that he did not do this. It should be noted here that the defense of Pearl Harbor was the responsibility of the Army and the then Army Air Force. It was their almost total failure in time of need that resulted in the slaughter of 3,000 sailors, and the immobilization of our sole offensive arm in the Pacific.

Adm Kimmel

I think that I can answer two other of your questions rather quickly. The Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy when they were in Washington, as they usually were, were advised just as promptly as was the President of the information contained in the Japanese telegrams. Admiral Theobald's book contains a list of the regular recipients of "magic" .

I am sorry that I have inflicted this long drawn out discussion on you; but simple answers cannot be given to the searching questions you have posed. I have tried to give you a careful and considered appraisal as I think that I sense from your letter that you are interested in an objective appraisal. Might I suggest that in the view of the historian the political direction of our government was not entirely guiltless for the debacle of Pearl Harbor as well as for the "Death march of the Bataan survivors". I make bold to say that this Republic of ours has been exceptionally well served by its professional military and naval people. They have consistently eschewed domestic politics to their personal detriment, and have freely offered their lives for the maintenance of policies that, in the field of foreign affairs, has, at times, seemed to take but small cognizance of the hard facts. Our wars have been won, thank goodness, by the superb courage and ability of our citizen forces, as is proper in a Republic. Nevertheless, it is heart rending for a professional to have to send this fine human material into combat, partially unprepared as we have had to do, because of the previous lack of appreciation on the part of our people of the requirements for national survival on our own terms.

Sincerely yours,

A. H. McCollum

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PAUL FREEMAN
WILLIAM LOGAN FOX
FREDERICK C. FIECHTER, JR.

August 2, 1954

Admiral A.H. McCollum,
3522 Third Street,
Arlington 1, Virginia

Dear Admiral McCollum:

My delay in acknowledging your letter of July 13th has been solely because I have been away on vacation. And, now that I have it, I feel most apologetic for having put you to so much trouble. Almost I would have preferred that you had tossed my letter into your scrap-basket. You have been most courteous, and I thank you sincerely.

My real difficulty is just this:- Was anyone to blame for Pearl Harbor? Perhaps Admiral Kimmel and General Short were not so vigilant as they might have been, but was Washington not really more at fault - and all things considered it seems to me that there is much weight to Admiral Theobald's theory.

To speak candidly, were I in the position of either General Marshall or Admiral Stark, I would welcome the book, for then the only fault one can lay at their doorsteps is that they did as they were bid by the only one who could "bid" them. And that fits in so well with the whole picture that reason and logic make the conclusion almost inevitable. What happened prior to 1940 seems (to me at least) rather immaterial, so far as concerns Pearl Harbor, for I am convinced that Roosevelt was determined to have this Country enter the war - if not by the front door then through Japan. And because of the temper of the people anything other than a serious attack by her upon us would not have availed him.

I send you an article by Admiral Beatty. In view of the facts set forth in your letter and in the book itself, I think it quite impotent. Would you mind returning it in the enclosed envelope please?

Well, we killed and maimed hundreds of thousands of our young men and spent hundreds of billions of dollars to destroy Germany and Japan - and now are striving to build them up again. The folly of his creatures must astonish even God Himself.

Thank you again and most sincerely.

Cordially yours,

Paul Freeman

PF:k (over)

It seems to me that much of the objection to the book is due to the author's implication that there was a "conspiracy." The word has ugly connotations which cause resentments. The Navy and the Army heads may or may not have suspected the purpose of their Chief, who surely would not have disclosed fully what was in his mind, but they were in no position to voice effective objections.

P.

3522 3rd., Street North
Arlington 1, Virginia
14 August 1954

Mr. Paul Freeman
Freeman, Fox & Fiechter
12 South 12th Street
Philadelphia 7, Pennsylvania

My dear Mr. Freeman:

Thank you for your letter of 2 August 1954. I am also enclosing herewith the article by Admiral Beatty which you sent me. He is a very pleasant person.

May I disagree with you that what happened before 1940 was of no moment? To my mind, the whole psychological and political atmosphere of what went on in the Pacific in 1941 was but a logical development of our policies and politics for the 20 to 40 years before that time. It has never been myhclaim that Washington was faultless in the Pearl Harbor affair. In fact my sworn testimony indicates otherwise. Nevertheless the appaling lack of tactical preparedness of the people on the spot at the time, of whom Admiral Theobald was one, still leaves me aghast. I say this in the light of one who was acting Fleet Operations Officer in December of 1937 at the time of the Panay incident.

To my mind one of the fatal errors of our diplomacy over the last thirty years has been our penchant for considering things Oriental as adjuncts to things European. Even so great a man as General Marshall made this mistake. Certainly since 1925 when the forcefulness of the Gun Boat policy in some of the Orient was shown to be invalid we still continued to think of the Orient in terms of European spheres of influence.

When you say that President Roosevelt wanted to get us into the European war by the front door if possible, by Japan if necessary, it seems to me that you disregard all Japanese evidence. Before about 1932 or 1933 it was possible for us to have made an accomodqtion with Japan. After about 1935 such an accomodation was no longer possible. When Admiral Yamamoto boasted that he would have breakfast in the White House -- He meant it--. Few of us still realize how our own apparent softness and pacifism lead the Japanese leaders to conclude that they could have their will with us with impunity. Not the least of their arguments was the refusal of President Hoover to support his Secretary of State, Stimsom, in stopping Japanese aggression in Manchuria in 1932.

Today we are witnissing an even more disagreeable and ominous debacle in Asia. We have settled a Korean war on shameful terms because we did not have the nerve to push it to an adequate conclusion. We tried to support the sorry French in Indo-China with our Mr. Dulles given the go by at Geneva. So far as the last two years are concerned our record in the Orient has been one of shameful capitulation. How far are we willing to go or how far can we gonin hinging a policy upon the whims of the decadent European national entities without regard to the realities of the Orient

Sincerely

A. H. McCollum